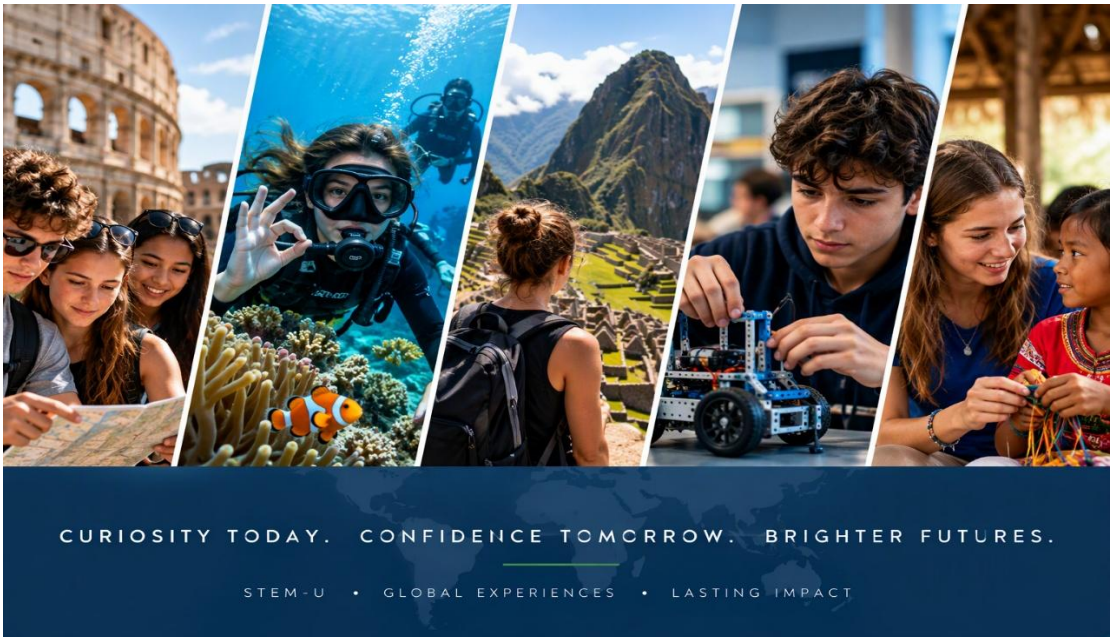
STEM STUDY TOURS
TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

STEM-U
Parent & Family Guide
2027



HAMMOCK EXPEDITIONS

Hammock Expeditions, LLC
1200 SE 14th Street, Suite 8-150
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712
P: 984.223.9866
www.HammockExpeditions.com
www.STEMStudyTours.com

STEM STUDY TOURS
TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

A warm welcome to our STEM-U families!

Thank you for choosing STEM-U for your student's summer experience. We understand that sending a student away on an educational travel program is exciting, but it can also bring plenty of questions. Our goal is to make sure you feel informed, prepared, and confident about the experience ahead.

STEM-U gives students opportunities to explore beyond the classroom through hands-on learning, meaningful travel, new cultures, real-world STEM experiences, and shared discovery. Along the way, students build confidence, independence, friendships, and a broader understanding of the world around them.

This Parent & Family Guide is your reference for preparing for a STEM-U experience. Inside, you'll find important information about travel documents, insurance, flights and luggage, health and medications, supervision, communication, accommodations, meals, student expectations, and emergency procedures.

STEM-U may include **student-only programs**, where designated STEM-U staff provide supervision and support, as well as **family programs**, where parents or guardians travel alongside their children. Where responsibilities or procedures differ, we will make that distinction clear throughout this guide.

Please read the guide before departure and review the applicable expectations with your student. Thoughtful preparation makes travel easier for everyone, particularly when something unexpected occurs along the way. Of course, no guide can anticipate every situation. If you have a question, concern, or information that may affect your student's experience, our team is here to help. **You need only to ask.**

Thank you for trusting us with the opportunity to share the world with your student. We sincerely appreciate that trust and look forward to an experience filled with learning, discovery, new connections, and memories that last far beyond the journey.

Michele

Michele Hammock
STEM Study Tours | STEM-U
USA: 984.223.9866
E: michele@stemstudytours.com
W: www.stemstudytours.com / www.hammockexpeditions.com

More Than a Summer Experience



STEM-U gives students opportunities to explore the world, discover new interests, build confidence, and connect learning with real people, places, and experiences.

Through hands-on STEM discovery, cultural exploration, new challenges, and shared experiences, participants develop valuable skills while seeing both the world and their own possibilities from a new perspective.

Whether participating in a student-only program or traveling as part of a family experience, STEM-U encourages curiosity, independence, connection, and growth through meaningful learning beyond the classroom.

Explore. Grow. Discover.

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Welcome to STEM-U

STEM-U is the summer program of STEM Study Tours, created to extend our approach to hands-on educational travel beyond traditional school-group programs. Building on STEM Study Tours' experience creating immersive learning journeys for students, STEM-U offers summer experiences designed for individual students and families who want to explore, learn, and discover the world through STEM. STEM-U experiences take participants beyond the classroom and into the real world. Through hands-on activities, expert-led learning, cultural exploration, and meaningful travel, each program encourages curiosity, confidence, independence, and connection.

This Parent & Family Guide is designed to help families prepare for a STEM-U experience and understand what to expect before departure, during travel, and throughout the program. It includes important information about travel documents, insurance, health and medications, flights, luggage, accommodations, meals, communication, supervision, participant conduct, emergency procedures, and other situations that may arise during travel.

STEM-U Program Formats

STEM-U programs may operate in one of two formats:

Student-Only Programs: Participants travel without a parent or legal guardian accompanying them. Designated members of the STEM-U Program Team provide supervision and support in accordance with the program itinerary, activity schedule, participant age range, and established STEM-U policies. Participants are expected to remain with their assigned group, follow staff instructions, observe all curfews and safety requirements, and communicate promptly with a member of the STEM-U Program Team if they need assistance.

Family Programs: Parents or legal guardians participate in the program alongside their children and retain responsibility for supervising their own minor children except during an activity or circumstance specifically identified as staff-supervised. The STEM-U Program Team coordinates the itinerary and program operations, but participation in a family program does not automatically transfer parental supervision responsibilities to STEM-U staff.

How to Use This Guide

Unless a section is specifically identified as applying only to a **Student-Only Program** or a **Family Program**, the information in this guide applies to both formats. Program requirements may vary based on the destination, participant age, activity level, transportation arrangements, and local laws. Families should read this guide together with all program-specific enrollment materials, forms, itineraries, packing information, and final travel documents.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for:

- ✓ Reading this guide and all program-specific information before departure
- ✓ Completing and returning every required form by the stated deadline
- ✓ Providing accurate and complete health, medication, dietary, accessibility, and emergency-contact information
- ✓ Confirming that the participant has the correct travel documents
- ✓ Reviewing the program expectations and Code of Conduct with the participant
- ✓ Informing STEM-U of any circumstance that could affect the participant's health, safety, travel, supervision, or ability to participate fully

Participants are responsible for understanding and following the expectations that apply to the program, cooperating with the STEM-U Program Team, and asking for assistance whenever needed.

Important: Information provided with a participant's specific program takes precedence when it establishes a destination-specific, activity-specific, or age-specific requirement. Families should contact STEM-U before departure if any instruction is unclear or if a participant's circumstances require additional planning. **Preparation is a shared responsibility. Clear information before departure helps the STEM-U Program Team support every participant more effectively throughout the experience.**

Before You Travel

Good preparation helps participants arrive feeling confident, informed, and ready to make the most of their STEM-U experience. Families should involve participants in the preparation process so they understand where they are going, what they will be doing, and what will be expected of them throughout the program.



Destination Preparation

Learning about the destination before travel helps participants feel more comfortable and prepared when they arrive. Families should review the itinerary together and talk about the places, activities, cultures, and environments included in the program.

Participants are encouraged to learn about:

- Local customs and etiquette
- History and culture
- Foods and daily life
- Basic words or phrases in the local language
- Climate and geography
- STEM subjects connected with the itinerary
- Activities, sites, or communities included in the program

As departure approaches, families should review the anticipated weather and conditions for each destination. Participants should pack for the activities, climate, and cultural settings they are likely to encounter, remembering that conditions can change unexpectedly.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Let Participants Lead the Learning

Invite your student to research part of the destination before departure. Encourage them to identify customs, foods, language basics, history, STEM connections, or activities that especially interest them. Arriving with some knowledge of the destination can make the experience more meaningful from the very first day.

Money & Payment Methods

Families should make sure participants have an appropriate plan for personal spending during the program. Program inclusions vary, so review the final itinerary carefully to understand which meals, activities, transportation, and other services are included and which expenses remain the participant's responsibility.

Participants may need spending money for:

- Meals or snacks not included in the program
- Souvenirs and personal purchases
- Checked-baggage fees where applicable
- Optional purchases during free time
- Personal services or incidental expenses
- Replacement of lost or damaged personal items
- Other expenses not specifically listed as included

For international programs, participants should understand the local currency and have a basic sense of its value compared with their home currency. Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in many destinations, but participants should also have access to a reasonable amount of local cash for smaller purchases or locations where cards may not be accepted.

Families should avoid sending participants with unnecessarily large amounts of cash. Cash should be divided and stored securely rather than kept entirely in one wallet, pocket, or bag.

Credit & Debit Cards

Before travel, families should:

- Confirm that the participant's card can be used at the destination
- Check international transaction and ATM fees
- Make sure the participant knows the card PIN
- Review daily spending and withdrawal limits
- Confirm how emergency funds or a replacement card could be provided if necessary

- Keep the card issuer's contact information separately from the card
- Provide a second payment option where appropriate

Participants should never share a PIN or allow another traveler to use their payment card.

Student-Only Programs: Participants should be prepared to keep track of their own spending money and follow any money-management instructions provided by the STEM-U Program Team. Unless a specific program arrangement states otherwise, STEM-U staff do not act as a personal bank or assume responsibility for cash or payment cards carried by participants.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians traveling on a family program remain responsible for managing their family's funds, payment methods, incidental expenses, and emergency financial needs.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Plan for More Than One Payment Method

Cards can be lost, declined, restricted, or temporarily unavailable, and cash may not be accepted everywhere. A sensible combination of payment methods gives participants a backup if one option becomes unavailable.

Phones & Connectivity

Mobile phones can be valuable tools during travel, providing access to communication, maps, travel information, translation tools, photographs, and other useful resources.

Before departure, families should confirm how the participant's mobile service will operate at the destination and what charges may apply. For international programs, check with your mobile provider regarding:

- International calling, texting, and data plans
- Roaming charges and settings
- Wi-Fi calling
- Device compatibility at the destination
- International SIM or eSIM options, where appropriate
- Procedures for a lost, damaged, or unavailable phone

Participants should understand that calls, messages, apps, automatic updates, photo backups, and other mobile-data use may result in additional charges depending on the service plan.

Phone Use During the Program

Phones should support the travel experience, not distract from it. Participants are expected to remain engaged with scheduled activities, learning experiences, staff instructions, other participants, and the destination.

The STEM-U Program Team may require phones to be silenced or put away during:

- Group briefings and safety instructions
- Educational visits, workshops, and field activities
- Meals and scheduled group activities
- Cultural or religious visits
- Activities where phone use could create a distraction or safety concern

Participants are expected to follow staff instructions regarding phone use promptly and respectfully.

Student-Only Programs: Parents and guardians should not expect an immediate response from participants throughout the day. Participants may be in scheduled activities, traveling between locations, sleeping because of time-zone differences, or in areas with limited connectivity.
If a participant has a problem or needs assistance during the program, the participant should speak with a member of the STEM-U Program Team promptly rather than communicating the concern only to someone at home. This allows the team on-site to understand the situation and provide appropriate assistance as quickly as possible.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians traveling with their children may establish their own reasonable phone-use expectations outside scheduled STEM-U activities. During group activities, all participants are expected to follow STEM-U staff, guide, instructor, venue, and safety requirements regarding device use.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Set Expectations Before Departure

Before travel, discuss when and how your student will communicate with home. Make sure the participant knows what to do if a phone is lost, damaged, unavailable, or cannot connect to a network. Most importantly, remind your student that if something is wrong while traveling, **tell the STEM-U Program Team first so we can help.**

Health Preparation

Before departure, families should make sure participants are prepared for the physical demands and health considerations of the program. STEM-U experiences may include long travel days, significant walking, outdoor activities, changing climates, unfamiliar foods, time-zone changes, and activities that differ from a participant's normal routine.

Participants should:

- Bring any required prescription medications in sufficient quantities for the entire program, plus a reasonable extra supply when possible
- Pack necessary medical supplies and personal health items
- Bring glasses, contact lenses, hearing devices, inhalers, EpiPens, or other regularly used items as applicable
- Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for scheduled activities
- Stay hydrated, eat regularly, and communicate promptly if feeling unwell
- Follow instructions provided by STEM-U staff, healthcare professionals, activity providers, and local authorities

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing complete and accurate information through the STEM-U registration portal regarding any medical, physical, dietary, accessibility, behavioral, or other condition that could affect participation or require additional planning.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Document All Health Information in the Registration Portal

All medical, health, medication, allergy, dietary, accessibility, behavioral, or other information that could affect a participant's health, safety, supervision, or participation must be documented in the participant's STEM-U registration portal. The registration portal is the official source used to prepare the participant information provided to the STEM-U Program Team in the field. Information provided only by email, telephone, text message, or informal conversation is not considered sufficient notification and does not replace the requirement to document the information in the registration portal. Families may contact STEM-U to discuss a participant's needs or circumstances at any time; however, parents and guardians remain responsible for ensuring that all relevant information is entered accurately and completely in the registration portal by the applicable deadline, typically 30 days before departure. If important information changes after the portal deadline, the parent or guardian must contact STEM-U promptly so that instructions can be provided for formally updating the participant's travel record. If it is not documented in the participant's official travel record, the field team may not have access to it.

Prescription Medications

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medications required during travel are accurately documented in the participant's STEM-U registration portal and provided in accordance with STEM-U medication procedures. Participants should bring enough medication for the entire program, plus a reasonable additional supply when possible in case of unexpected travel delays.

Prescription medications should:

- Remain in the original pharmacy-labeled container
- Clearly show the participant's name, medication name, dosage, and prescribing instructions
- Be carried in hand luggage rather than checked baggage whenever permitted
- Be accompanied by any documentation required for travel or entry into the destination country
- Be entered completely and accurately in the STEM-U registration portal

Families are responsible for checking whether a prescription or over-the-counter medication is restricted or prohibited in the destination or any country through which the participant will travel. A medication that is legally prescribed at home may be regulated differently elsewhere.

Student-Only Programs: Medication arrangements must be established before departure. Depending on the participant, medication, and program requirements, medication may be self-carried and self-administered by the participant or stored and supported by designated STEM-U personnel. Any staff-supported medication arrangement must be approved in writing before departure and documented through the required authorization process.
Parents and guardians must complete all required medication forms and provide clear written instructions before departure. Verbal instructions, emails, text messages, or informal conversations do not replace the required documentation.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians traveling with their children remain responsible for carrying, storing, and managing their child's medications unless STEM-U has specifically agreed in writing to another arrangement.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Medication Information Must Be Documented

All medication information, including prescription medications, regular over-the-counter medications, inhalers, EpiPens, and other medically necessary items, must be documented in the participant's STEM-U registration portal and on any required medication authorization forms. If medication information changes after submission, the parent or guardian must notify STEM-U promptly and follow the instructions provided for formally updating the participant's travel record. If medication information is not included in the participant's official travel record, the STEM-U Program Team in the field may not have access to it.

Glasses, Contact Lenses & Personal Health Supplies

Participants who wear prescription glasses or contact lenses should bring everything they will need for the full duration of the program. When possible, participants who rely on contact lenses should also bring a backup pair of prescription glasses in case lenses are lost, damaged, or cannot be worn.

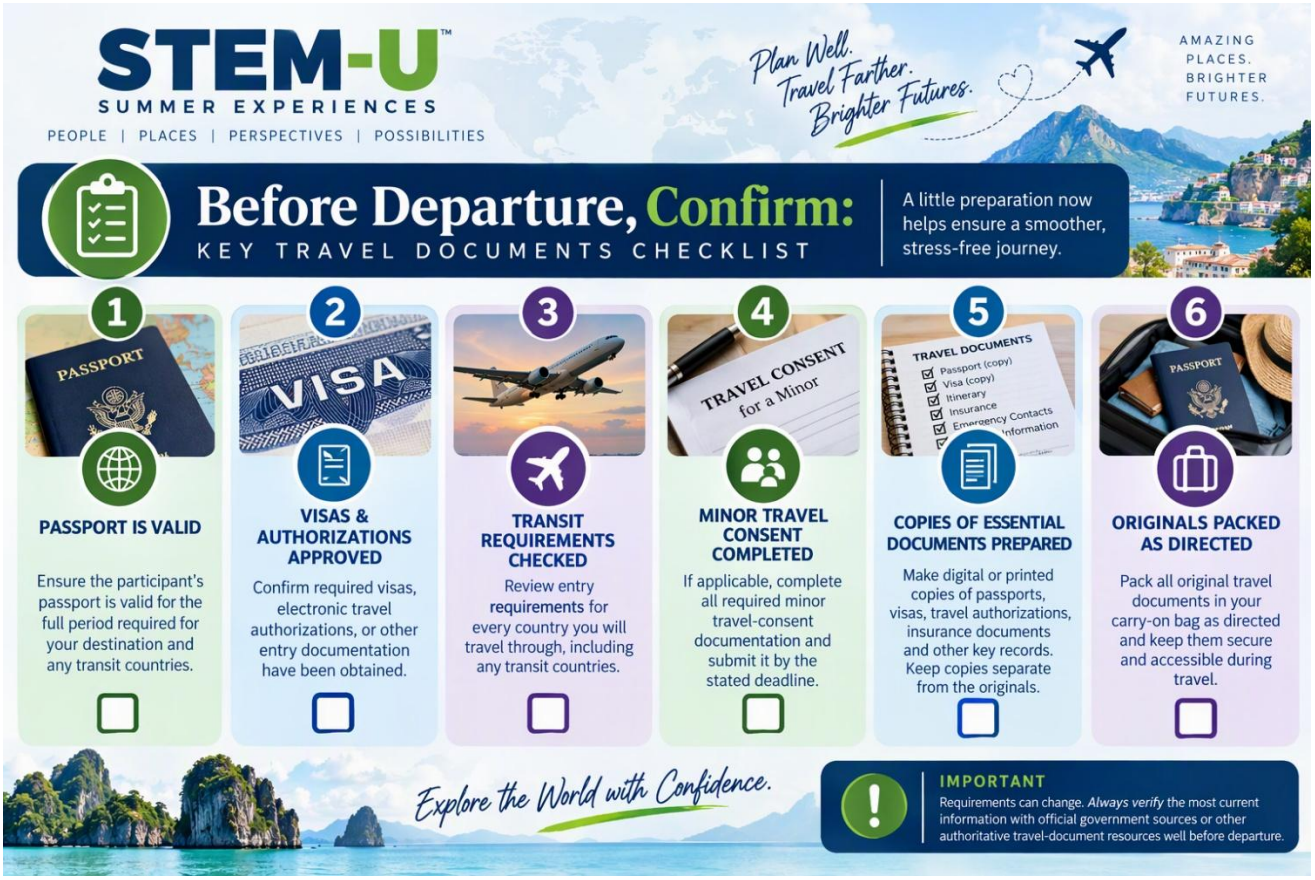
Participants should bring sufficient quantities of any personal health supplies they regularly use, including contact-lens supplies, retainers or dental appliances, hearing-device supplies, menstrual products, skin-care items required for medical needs, and other specialized personal-care products. Families should not assume that the same products, brands, prescriptions, or replacement supplies will be readily available at the destination.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Pack a Backup When Possible

For essential items that would be difficult to replace while traveling, consider packing a backup or additional supply. Whenever practical, critical items should be carried in hand luggage so they remain available if checked baggage is delayed.

Passports & Entry Requirements

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that every participant has the correct, valid travel documents required for the program. Requirements vary according to the participant's nationality, passport, destination, length of stay, and any countries through which the participant will transit.



Depending on the program, required documentation may include:

- A valid passport
- Visa or other entry documentation
- Electronic travel authorization
- Documentation required for a minor traveling without a parent or legal guardian
- Additional identification or supporting documents required by the destination or transit country

For international travel, families should verify the requirements that apply specifically to the participant. Travelers on the same STEM-U program may have different entry requirements because they hold different passports or nationalities.

The participant's name on airline reservations and travel documents must match the name shown on the passport or identification being used for travel. Parents and guardians should review all travel information carefully and notify STEM-U promptly if anything appears incorrect.

Passport Validity

A passport must meet the validity requirements of every destination and transit country included in the journey. Some countries require passports to remain valid for a specified period beyond the planned date of departure from the country. Families should check passport validity well in advance of travel and allow sufficient time for a new or renewed passport when necessary.

Visas & Electronic Travel Authorizations

A visa or electronic travel authorization may be required even when a traditional visa is not. Requirements can depend on nationality, passport type, destination, purpose of travel, and transit arrangements. Parents and guardians are responsible for obtaining required visas and travel authorizations by the applicable deadlines unless STEM-U specifically confirms in writing that an item is being arranged as part of the program.

Student-Only Programs: Parents and guardians must complete all required documentation authorizing the minor to travel without a parent or legal guardian and submit it according to STEM-U instructions. STEM-U will provide instructions before departure regarding passport custody during the program. Participants must follow STEM-U Program Team procedures when passports or other identification are collected, secured, distributed, or required for travel.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians traveling with their children remain responsible for the passports, visas, electronic travel authorizations, identification, and other travel documentation required for themselves and their minor children.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Verify and Update Travel Documents

Do not wait until shortly before departure to review passport validity, visa requirements, electronic travel authorizations, or minor travel documentation. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that participants have the correct and valid documentation required for travel. If a participant receives a new or replacement passport, changes legal name or nationality, or has any other change to passport or identification information after registration, the parent or guardian must update the participant's information in the STEM-U registration portal and review all visas, visa waivers, electronic travel authorizations, consent forms, and other documents connected with the previous passport or identification. A travel authorization associated with an old passport will need to be updated or obtained again. All changes must be reflected in the participant's official travel record. Providing updated information only by email, telephone, text message, or conversation does not replace the requirement to update the registration portal. If a participant is unable to travel because documentation is missing, invalid, expired, incomplete, outdated, or does not meet applicable entry or transit requirements, any resulting costs, delays, additional supervision, transportation, accommodation, or other arrangements may remain the responsibility of the participant and family.

Packing & Luggage Preparation

Families should review the program-specific packing information carefully and help participants pack with the itinerary, destination, climate, activities, and baggage allowances in mind. Participants should be involved in packing their own luggage so they know what they have brought and where important items are located. Participants on student-only programs should be able to manage their own suitcase, carry-on bag, and personal belongings without relying on STEM-U staff.

Participants should:

- Follow the packing guidance provided for the specific program
- Check airline baggage size and weight allowances before departure
- Pack appropriate clothing and footwear for scheduled activities
- Clearly identify luggage with the participant's name and contact information
- Keep valuables and essential items in hand luggage
- Leave unnecessary valuables and expensive items at home
- Leave some room in the suitcase for purchases made during travel
- Be able to lift, roll, carry, and keep track of their own luggage

Carry-On Essentials

Important items should be packed in hand luggage whenever airline and security regulations allow. These include:

- Passport and required travel documents
- Prescription medications and medically necessary items
- Glasses or contact-lens supplies
- Phone and charging equipment
- One change of clothing
- Basic toiletries permitted through airport security
- Any essential item that would be difficult to replace if checked baggage were delayed

Student-Only Programs: Participants are responsible for managing their own luggage throughout the program. STEM-U staff will provide guidance and assistance when necessary, but participants should arrive prepared to identify, move, pack, and repack their own belongings.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians remain responsible for their family's luggage and for helping minor participants manage their belongings as appropriate.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Let Your Student Pack

It can be tempting to pack everything for your student, but participants should know exactly what is in their luggage and where to find it. Have your student participate in packing, then review the final contents together. This builds independence before the program even begins.

Electrical Items & Charging

Participants should prepare for the electrical outlets and voltage used at the destination. Plug shapes and electrical standards vary between countries, and some programs may travel through more than one country with different requirements.

Before departure, families should:

- Confirm which plug adapter or adapters are required for the destination

- Check that phones, laptops, tablets, cameras, and chargers are compatible with the local voltage
- Bring charging cables needed for all devices
- Label chargers and adapters with the participant's name
- Avoid bringing unnecessary electrical devices
- Consider a compact multi-port USB charger when several devices need to be charged

A plug adapter changes the shape of the plug; it does not change electrical voltage. Hair dryers, curling irons, straighteners, electric shavers, and similar appliances should only be used when they are compatible with the voltage at the destination. When in doubt, leave the item at home.

Power Banks & Spare Batteries

Power banks, portable chargers, and spare lithium batteries must be packed in carry-on luggage, not checked baggage, and must comply with applicable airline requirements. Participants are responsible for keeping personal electronics, chargers, adapters, and power banks secure throughout the program.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Keep Charging Simple

Whenever possible, send only the electronics your student genuinely needs. Fewer devices mean fewer chargers, adapters, and valuable items to keep track of while traveling.

Luggage Allowances

Airline baggage allowances vary by carrier, route, and ticket type. Families should review the baggage information provided for the program and confirm the permitted number, size, and weight of checked and carry-on bags before departure. When a program includes more than one airline or an internal flight, participants must pack within the most restrictive baggage allowance that applies to the itinerary. A bag accepted on one flight may exceed the allowance permitted on another.

Any excess-baggage, overweight-bag, or additional-luggage charges resulting from a participant exceeding the applicable allowance are the responsibility of the participant and family.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Weigh Before You Go

Weigh checked and carry-on luggage at home before leaving for the airport. Do not pack a suitcase right up to the maximum permitted weight. Leaving several pounds or kilograms of extra capacity allows for differences between scales and gives participants room for purchases made during the program.

Travel Dress Code

Participants should pack clothing that is comfortable, practical, and appropriate for the destinations, activities, cultural settings, and weather conditions included in the program. Program-specific packing guidance will identify any specialized clothing or footwear required.

Dress for the Activity

Participants should wear clothing and footwear suitable for the day's itinerary, including comfortable walking shoes, closed-toe footwear, outdoor layers, rain or sun protection, and any activity-specific clothing or protective equipment identified in the program materials.

Cultural & Site Considerations

Religious sites, cultural institutions, schools, businesses, laboratories, and other venues may require modest, professional, or safety-appropriate dress. Participants must respect local customs and comply with all dress requirements communicated by the STEM-U Program Team, venue, or activity provider.

Clothing Standards

Clothing displaying offensive, discriminatory, sexually explicit, drug- or alcohol-related, or otherwise inappropriate words or images is not permitted during STEM-U programs. Clothing that is suitable for recreation or free time may not be appropriate for every scheduled visit.

Student-Only Programs: Participants must follow daily clothing and footwear instructions. A participant who is not appropriately dressed or equipped may be unable to participate until a suitable alternative is available.

Family Programs: Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring their minor children are appropriately dressed and equipped. All participants must comply with venue, provider, cultural, and safety requirements.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Pack for the Itinerary, Not Just the Destination

A warm destination may still include air-conditioned laboratories, religious sites requiring modest dress, rugged field activities, or cool evenings. Review the full itinerary and pack appropriate footwear and layers for the complete range of experiences.

Travel Protection / Insurance

Travel insurance is mandatory for every traveler participating in a STEM-U program. Appropriate coverage must remain in effect for the full duration of the program. Travel without the required coverage is not permitted.

Travel involves financial commitments and circumstances that cannot always be anticipated or controlled. Illness, injury, cancellation, interruption, delays, missed connections, lost or delayed baggage, emergency medical treatment, and evacuation can create significant costs.

Understanding Coverage

Coverage varies considerably by provider, policy, country, traveler, destination, and activity. Families must review the actual policy wording, including covered reasons, limits, exclusions, deductibles or excesses, pre-existing-condition provisions, medical benefits, evacuation benefits, purchase deadlines, and claim requirements. Families should not assume their usual health insurance applies outside their home country or provides adequate protection for the destination and planned activities. The selected travel insurance must include suitable travel and medical protection.

Cancel For Any Reason Coverage

STEM-U strongly recommends that families consider Cancel For Any Reason coverage, or comparable coverage where available. Standard cancellation insurance normally covers only the reasons stated in the policy. CFAR coverage may provide greater flexibility but commonly reimburses only a portion of eligible non-refundable costs and must often be purchased shortly after the initial program payment.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Purchase Coverage Early

Some benefits may only be available when insurance is purchased within a limited period after the initial deposit or payment. Families should review available coverage and purchase deadlines immediately after registration.

Arranging Travel Insurance

Insurance options are made available during registration, but families may obtain suitable coverage from another provider. Regardless of provider, each traveler must carry or have accessible policy details and emergency-assistance information during travel. Families remain responsible for understanding the policy and communicating directly with the insurer regarding eligibility, coverage, authorization, and claims.

Travel Day: Flights, Motorcoaches, Luggage & Meals

Travel day is one of the busiest parts of the program. Participants must arrive prepared, remain attentive, follow instructions promptly, and keep passports, boarding documents, medication, and essential personal items secure and accessible.

Departure Meeting & Airport Arrival

Families will receive final departure details before travel. Participants must report to the stated meeting point on time. For air travel, the group must be physically at the airport at least three hours before the scheduled departure unless STEM-U provides a different written instruction. This is the meeting time at the airport, not the time to leave home.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Three Hours Means Three Hours

A student group requires additional time to assemble, confirm travelers and documents, check luggage, clear security, and move to the gate together. Traffic or transportation time must be added before the three-hour airport-arrival period.

Air Travel

Participants must remain with the group unless a member of the STEM-U Program Team gives permission to separate. They must monitor announcements, gate information, boarding instructions, and directions from airline, airport, and STEM-U personnel. Airline schedules, seats, gates, and procedures are controlled by the carrier and may change without notice. Passports, identification, boarding documents, medication, phones, wallets, and carry-on belongings must not be left unattended. Baggage-claim receipts or checked-luggage tags should be retained until bags are collected at the final destination.

Baggage Allowances & Fees

Baggage size, weight, number of pieces, and fees vary by airline, route, and ticket type. Families must follow the confirmed program information and pack to the most restrictive allowance on the itinerary. Unless specifically stated as included, additional, excess, or overweight-baggage fees are the responsibility of the participant and family.

Meals During Air Travel

Meal service varies by airline and route. Participants should not assume that a meal will be provided. When advance special-meal requests are available, STEM-U will submit dietary information documented in the registration portal, but airline requests cannot be guaranteed. Participants with allergies or medically necessary dietary restrictions should not rely solely on airline catering. Families should prepare a permitted backup food plan and verify current airline, airport-security, customs, and border requirements for food carried during the journey.

Motorcoach Travel

Participants must board promptly, observe departure times, keep aisles clear, use seat belts where provided, respect the driver and vehicle, and remove personal belongings and rubbish at each stop. Before leaving an aircraft or motorcoach, participants should check seats, pockets, floors, overhead areas, and charging outlets.

Lost or Delayed Baggage

Missing checked baggage must be reported to the airline or designated baggage service before leaving the airport. The STEM-U Program Team will assist with the report and program logistics, while the family or traveler will remain responsible for airline follow-up and any insurance claim. All claim numbers, receipts, and documentation must be retained.

Legal Requirements for Travel

Accurate participant information and valid travel documentation are essential. Airlines, transportation providers, and government authorities require information to match the identification and travel documents used for the journey. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring all required passports, identification, visas, authorizations, consent documents, permits, and clearances are complete and valid.

Legal Names & Registration Information

The participant's full legal name, date of birth, nationality, passport or identification details, and other required information in the registration portal must match the documents used for travel. Errors or outdated information may result in additional costs, refusal of check-in, boarding, transit, or entry, and inability to participate.

Dual Nationals

Participants holding citizenship in more than one country must confirm which passport or travel document is required for each part of the journey. Some governments require their citizens to enter or leave using that country's passport. Families must verify current requirements using official government sources.

Visas & Electronic Travel Authorizations

A visa, electronic travel authorization, visa-waiver registration, online arrival declaration, or other advance permission may be required even when a traditional visa is not. Requirements depend on nationality, passport, destination, transit points, and individual circumstances and may change before departure. Travelers must have the valid passport they will use for travel before applying for an authorization linked to passport details. If a passport is replaced or changes, the family must verify whether a new authorization is required and update the registration portal immediately. In most cases, participants are not allowed to travel on outdated information and will be denied boarding. Please go the extra mile and double-check.

Minor Travel Documentation

For student-only programs, parents and guardians must complete all STEM-U and destination-required documentation authorizing the minor to travel without a parent or legal guardian. Documents must be submitted by the stated deadline and originals or notarized copies supplied when required.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Use Official Sources

Entry requirements can change. Families must verify current requirements for the participant's nationality, passport, destination, and transit countries through official government, border, immigration, or embassy sources. Third-party travel websites should not be the sole authority.

Domestic U.S. Identification

For domestic U.S. air travel, adults must present identification accepted by the Transportation Security Administration. STEM-U requires every participant, regardless of age, to carry identification appropriate to the journey. Families must review the current identification instructions provided for the program.

Your STEM-U Itinerary

The final itinerary is the working day-by-day schedule for the program and includes confirmed activities, transfers, meals, excursions, and other important arrangements. It may be updated as operating times and supplier details are finalized. Final itineraries are normally provided at least two weeks before departure, provided required participant information, forms, documentation, and payments have been received and no outstanding changes remain. Families and participants should review the current version carefully.

Understanding the Itinerary

Times are shown using the 24-hour clock. Participants should understand the daily meeting, departure, meal, and activity times. The electronic itinerary may include a day-by-day schedule and a separate section or tab containing essential travel information such as accommodations, transportation providers, and emergency contacts.

Operational changes may occur because of weather, transportation, supplier availability, safety considerations, or other circumstances. During the program, participants must follow the updated instructions provided by the STEM-U Program Team, even when they differ from the itinerary issued before departure.

While Traveling

Travel disruptions, weather, supplier changes, illness, or other circumstances can affect the program. Families should use the communication procedures provided by STEM-U and should not rely on airlines or suppliers to notify STEM-U automatically.

Communication With Parents & Families

For **student-only STEM-U programs**, a parents-only WhatsApp group will be created before departure. STEM-U will use the group to provide a daily update about the group's activities and, when available and appropriate, share photographs from the day. The WhatsApp group is intended to help families stay connected to the overall program experience without interrupting participants during scheduled activities.

The parents-only WhatsApp group is an outbound update channel. Only designated STEM-U administrators will be permitted to post in the group. It is not monitored for questions, urgent concerns, participant-specific matters, or emergency communications. Parents must use the designated STEM-U contact method provided before departure when assistance or a response is required.

Parents should not expect immediate replies from participants during activities, transportation, meals, time-zone changes, or periods of limited connectivity. Participants will have appropriate opportunities to communicate with home, but the STEM-U experience is also designed to encourage participants to remain engaged with the group, activities, and destination.

If a participant has a concern, the participant must tell a member of the STEM-U Program Team promptly so the team can understand the situation and assist on-site. Parents who receive a concerning message should encourage the participant to notify staff and should contact STEM-U through the designated communication channel when additional help is needed.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Tell the Team That Can Help

A message sent only to someone at home may delay on-site assistance. Participants should report illness, injury, conflict, lost property, or another concern directly to the STEM-U Program Team as soon as possible.

Airport, Border & Customs Procedures

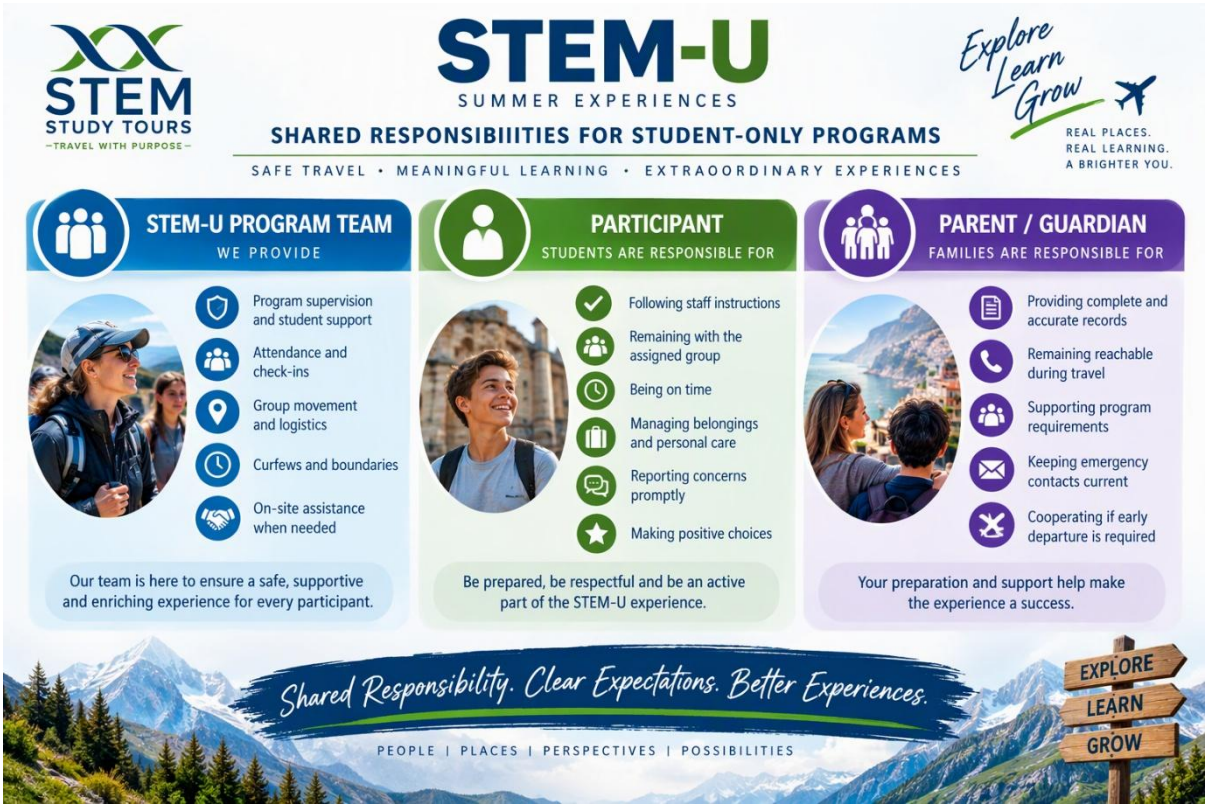
Participants must follow the instructions of airline, airport, security, immigration, customs, and STEM-U personnel. Checked baggage may need to be collected and rechecked during international connections. Participants must remain with the group and may not move ahead or leave a designated area without staff permission.

Luggage Security

Checked baggage may be inspected by security authorities. If a bag is locked, the lock must meet applicable airport and government requirements. Participants remain responsible for securing personal belongings and identifying their luggage throughout the journey.

Daily Operations, Supervision & Activities

The STEM-U Program Team coordinates the itinerary, transportation, suppliers, activities, participant support, and supervision arrangements appropriate to the program format. Participants must follow staff instructions, remain punctual, and contribute to a respectful and cooperative group environment.



Student-Only Program Supervision: Designated STEM-U staff provide supervision and support throughout student-only programs. Participants must remain with their assigned group, use required buddy or check-in procedures, observe boundaries and curfews, and obtain permission before separating from the group or changing locations. Supervision does not remove each participant's responsibility to follow instructions, manage personal belongings, communicate needs, and make appropriate choices. **Families must ensure participants are able to meet the independence and behavioral expectations described in the program materials and Code of Conduct.**

Family Program Responsibilities: Parents and legal guardians on family programs retain responsibility for supervising their own minor children except during an activity or circumstance specifically identified as staff-supervised. STEM-U coordinates the program but does not assume supervision responsibilities.

Hotels, Curfews & Evening Conduct

Participants must respect accommodation rules, other guests, room assignments, quiet hours, and staff instructions. Unless another time is established for the program, student-only participants should be in assigned rooms by 10:00 p.m., with quiet/no-noise expectations in effect by 10:30 p.m. Itinerary needs, age group, destination, or staff judgment may require an earlier or later schedule.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping & Prohibited Substances

Minor participants may not purchase, possess, receive, or use alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, cannabis, illegal drugs, or other prohibited substances during the program, regardless of local laws or practices. Adults on family programs must comply with local law and may not provide prohibited substances to minors or allow consumption to interfere with supervision, safety, or group participation.

Sun, Insect & Personal Protection

Participants are responsible for carrying and properly using sunscreen, insect repellent, hydration supplies, protective clothing, and any other personal-protection items appropriate to the destination and daily activities. STEM-U staff may provide general reminders when conditions warrant, but participants are responsible for applying and reapplying their own sunscreen and insect repellent, staying appropriately hydrated, and following instructions regarding protective clothing or equipment. Staff cannot monitor or personally manage these routine responsibilities for each participant.

Students participating in a student-only STEM-U program must be sufficiently independent to manage these basic personal-care responsibilities throughout the program.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Prepare Your Student for Independence

Before departure, parents and guardians should make sure their student understands when and how to use sunscreen, insect repellent, hydration supplies, and other routine personal-protection items. If a participant requires assistance or supervision with a personal-care need because of a medical, developmental, accessibility, or other circumstance, that requirement must be documented in the STEM-U registration portal before travel so the STEM-U team can determine what support can reasonably be provided.

Punctuality & Schedule Changes

The time shown on the itinerary is the time the group must be ready, not the time to begin gathering. Late participants can affect transportation, meals, reservations, and activities and may cause an experience to be shortened or forfeited. Updated staff instructions take precedence when schedules change.

Concerns During the Program

Concerns involving accommodations, meals, transportation, activities, instruction, behavior, or another program component should be reported promptly to the STEM-U Program Team. Early communication gives the team the best opportunity to investigate and address the matter while the program is underway.

Rental Equipment & Damage

Participants must use rental or specialist equipment responsibly and return it according to supplier instructions. Charges for loss, damage, misuse, or failure to return equipment are the responsibility of the participant and family unless the program materials state otherwise. Documentation should be retained for any possible insurance claim.

Lost Personal Items

Lost property should be reported promptly while the program is still in the area so the STEM-U Program Team has the best opportunity to assist. STEM-U may help identify the venue, accommodation, transportation provider, or other appropriate contact, but cannot guarantee that lost property will be located or recovered.

Once the group has departed the location, the participant and family are responsible for any continued follow-up regarding the lost item, including contacting the appropriate venue or provider to determine whether the item has been found. Any packaging, shipping, customs, retrieval, replacement, or return costs remain the responsibility of the participant and family.

Additional Medical, Behavioral or Participation Needs During Travel

If a participant becomes ill or injured, the STEM-U Program Team will arrange appropriate on-site assistance and contact the parent, guardian, medical provider, or insurer as required. Medical professionals determine treatment; insurers determine coverage and authorization. Families remain responsible for costs not covered by insurance. Medical reports, discharge papers, prescriptions, receipts, and written travel or activity recommendations should be retained. A participant may be removed from an activity or require modified arrangements when health, safety, medical advice, behavioral concerns, or staff judgment requires it.

If a participant becomes too ill, injured, emotionally or behaviorally unable, or otherwise unable to continue safely and appropriately with the program, STEM-U may require the participant to leave the program early. In a student-only program, the parent or legal guardian is responsible for promptly making arrangements to collect the participant or arrange an alternative approved adult and onward travel, as directed by STEM-U.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Early Departure From the Program

If STEM-U determines that a participant cannot safely or appropriately continue with the group because of illness, injury, significant behavioral concerns, repeated failure to follow program requirements, or another circumstance requiring removal from the program, **the parent or legal guardian must cooperate promptly with STEM-U and make the necessary arrangements for the participant to leave the program.**

The family is responsible for costs associated with that early departure, which may include airfare or other transportation, accommodation, meals, medical expenses, changes to existing travel arrangements, and additional supervision or staff costs required until the participant is released to the parent, guardian, or other approved adult. **STEM-U is not responsible for providing indefinite individual supervision to a participant who can no longer continue with the scheduled program.**

Communication With Parents & Families

Before departure, STEM-U will identify the routine and emergency communication methods for the program. Families must keep parent, guardian, and emergency-contact information current in the registration portal and remain reachable during the travel period.



Routine Updates

The frequency and format of routine updates may vary by program. Participants may communicate with home during appropriate personal time, subject to connectivity, time zones, activities, and phone-use expectations. Routine contact should not interrupt the educational program or group schedule.

Urgent or Emergency Communication

For urgent matters, families should use the STEM-U contact information provided with the final travel documents. Social-media messages, messages to individual suppliers, or informal contact with staff personal accounts should not be relied upon for emergencies.

When STEM-U Will Contact a Family

STEM-U may contact a parent or guardian regarding illness or injury, significant behavioral concerns, travel-document issues, material itinerary disruption, supervision concerns, removal from an activity or program, or another circumstance requiring family involvement or a decision.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Keep Contact Details Current

Parents and guardians must ensure telephone numbers, email addresses, authorized contacts, and emergency contacts in the registration portal remain accurate through the end of the program. Changes communicated informally do not replace updating the official record.

Loss of Passport

A lost passport can disrupt the program and may result in missed activities, additional travel, emergency accommodation, replacement-document fees, and delayed return. Participants must follow STEM-U passport-custody procedures and report a missing document immediately.

Passport Management

For student-only international programs, STEM-U will establish a controlled process for distributing, verifying, recollecting, counting, and securing passports. Participants must present passports when instructed and return them promptly when staff are responsible for safekeeping. Family-program adults remain responsible for their own family's documents unless another written arrangement applies.

If a Passport Is Lost

STEM-U will assist with locating the appropriate embassy or consulate, coordinating appointments and local transportation, communicating with the family, and adjusting program arrangements when possible. Replacement requirements depend on nationality, age, location, and the passport-issuing authority.

A STEM-U staff member may need to remain with a student-only participant who cannot continue with the group. Families must cooperate promptly and may be required to travel, collect the participant, provide documentation, authorize arrangements, or arrange onward travel.

Costs & Insurance

All costs arising from the loss or replacement of a passport remain the responsibility of the participant and family. These may include document fees, transportation, accommodation, meals, staff expenses, additional supervision, missed services, and replacement airfare. Families should contact their travel insurer and retain all receipts and records.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Passport Accountability

The easiest passport emergency to manage is the one that never occurs. Participants must follow every instruction regarding when passports are carried, presented, returned, counted, and secured.

Accommodations

Accommodations are shared environments. Participants must respect property rules, room assignments, other guests, quiet hours, staff, and personal boundaries throughout the stay.



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Hammock Expeditions, LLC
1200 SE 14th Street, Suite 8-150
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712
P: 984.223.9866
www.HammockExpeditions.com
www.STEMStudyTours.com

STEM STUDY TOURS
TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

Room Assignments

STEM-U participants will generally share rooms with other participants; however, each participant will have an individual bed or designated sleeping space. Participants will not be assigned to share a bed with another participant.

Room configurations are based on the program arrangements, participant information, supervision requirements, safeguarding considerations, participant age and gender, and the room types available at each accommodation. Specific room configurations, locations, or proximity requests cannot be guaranteed.

Preferred roommate requests are welcome and will be accommodated whenever reasonably possible. All requested roommates must be fully registered for the program before room assignments can be made, and roommate requests remain subject to program requirements, safeguarding considerations, room availability, and final accommodation configurations.

Student-only programs: Participants may not change rooms, exchange roommates, or invite another participant into their assigned room without permission from the STEM-U Program Team.

Family programs: Room arrangements will be based on the family's confirmed registration and accommodation requirements. Parents and guardians remain responsible for supervising their own minor children and complying with the confirmed rooming arrangements.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | Roommate Requests

If your student would like to room with another registered participant, submit the request as early as possible. Both participants must be fully registered before STEM-U can consider the request. We will make every reasonable effort to honor roommate preferences, but specific assignments cannot be guaranteed.

Arrival & Room Inspection

Existing damage, missing items, or maintenance concerns should be reported immediately. Participants and families may be financially responsible for damage, loss, excessive cleaning, missing keys, or other charges caused during the stay.

Incidental Charges & Deposits

Personal purchases and hotel incidental charges are not included unless specifically stated. Family-program adults remain responsible for family charges. On student-only programs, prohibited room charges or losses may be charged to the participant and family. Some properties may require a payment method or deposit.

Safes & Valuables

Participants are strongly encouraged to leave expensive jewelry, watches, cameras, electronics, designer items, and other unnecessary valuables at home. If an item is not needed for the program and would be difficult or costly to replace, we recommend not bringing it.

Secure-storage options vary by accommodation and cannot be guaranteed. Participants are responsible for keeping phones, electronics, money, jewelry, and other personal belongings secure and for following STEM-U procedures regarding passports and other important travel documents.

STEM-U cannot guarantee the security of personal property and is not responsible for lost, stolen, misplaced, or damaged personal belongings. Families should review their travel insurance coverage for personal property and understand any applicable limits, exclusions, or documentation requirements.

PARENT & FAMILY TIP | If You Would Hate to Lose It, Leave It at Home

Travel involves frequent transitions between airports, vehicles, accommodations, activities, and public spaces. The simplest way to protect an expensive or irreplaceable item is not to bring it unless it is genuinely needed for the program.

Pools & Recreational Facilities

The presence of a swimming pool, beach, fitness center, or other recreational facility does not mean participant use is automatically permitted or supervised. **Student-only participants may use swimming or recreational facilities only when authorized by the STEM-U Program Team and when the required supervision is in place.** Family-program parents and guardians remain responsible for their own children except during activities specifically identified as staff-supervised.

Participants must not enter a pool or other body of water unless they are confident, competent swimmers for the conditions involved. A participant who cannot swim safely and independently, or who is uncertain about their swimming ability, must remain out of the water unless participating in an activity specifically designed and supervised for that skill level.

Participants must follow all lifeguard, facility, activity-provider, and STEM-U instructions regarding swimming areas, water depth, diving, flotation devices, boundaries, and permitted activities. Peer pressure, including friends or roommates choosing to swim, is never a reason to enter the water.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Know Your Student's Swimming Ability

Before departure, parents and guardians must discuss swimming ability honestly with their student. A participant who is not a confident swimmer must understand that they are expected to remain out of pools and other bodies of water unless STEM-U has specifically confirmed that the activity is appropriate and supervised for non-swimmers.
If a participant has a limitation, medical condition, accessibility need, or other circumstance affecting safe participation in water activities, it must be documented in the STEM-U registration portal before travel.

Before Departure

Participants must check beds, closets, drawers, bathrooms, safes, outlets, and charging areas; collect all belongings and medication; report any damage; and be ready by the stated departure time. Student-only room checks will be completed according to STEM-U procedures. Family-program adults are responsible for checking their family's rooms.

Any additional charges assessed by an accommodation, activity provider, rental company, or other supplier because of damage, loss, missing items, excessive cleaning, misuse of equipment or facilities, or other participant-caused expenses must be settled by the responsible participant or family before departure from the accommodation or activity whenever payment is required at that time.

If responsibility is shared among multiple participants, the associated costs may be divided among the participants involved. STEM-U is not responsible for paying participant-incurred charges on behalf of a family.

Meals & Dietary Requirements

Meals are part of the travel experience, and foods, ingredients, portions, service styles, and meal times may differ from home. Participants should approach meals with flexibility and understand that group menus are commonly arranged in advance and may provide limited choices.

Included Meals

Included meals may be served as set menus, buffets, boxed meals, or limited-choice menus. Food or beverages beyond the program inclusion may be purchased at the participant's expense where available. Meals may not be included during some arrival, departure, airport, or travel periods; the final itinerary identifies the meals provided.

Dietary Requirements & Allergies

All dietary requirements and food allergies must be documented accurately in the STEM-U registration portal by the applicable deadline. STEM-U will communicate documented needs to relevant suppliers, but substitutions and choices vary by destination and supplier and cannot be guaranteed.

A participant with a serious allergy or medically necessary restriction should not rely solely on group meal arrangements. Families must provide required medication, written instructions, and an appropriate plan developed with the participant's medical provider. Participants must communicate concerns before eating and follow all safety instructions.

PARENT & FAMILY REQUIREMENT | Dietary Information Must Be in the Portal

Email, telephone, text message, or informal conversation does not replace documenting allergies and dietary requirements in the registration portal. If information changes after the deadline, contact STEM-U immediately and follow the process for updating the official record.

Food Preferences

STEM-U will request reasonable accommodations for documented dietary needs but cannot guarantee individual preferences or a selection of alternatives. A participant who declines an appropriate option because of personal preference may need to purchase another meal at the family's expense, where available.

Your STEM-U Program Team

The STEM-U Program Team is the group of adults responsible for operating the program, supporting participants, and carrying out the supervision structure appropriate to the program format. Roles may include a Tour Director, STEM-U staff, program leaders, local or national guides, instructors, and other specialists.

Tour Director

The Tour Director is the primary operational link among the group, STEM-U, and suppliers. The Tour Director coordinates the itinerary, transportation, accommodations, activities, meals, guides, and other included services and works with the Operations Team when changes or problems arise.

STEM-U Staff & Program Leaders

On student-only programs, designated STEM-U staff provide participant supervision and support, including attendance checks, group movement, curfews, behavioral expectations, communication, and response to participant needs. The staffing structure may vary according to group size, age, destination, and activities.

Local Guides & Activity Instructors

Local guides, activity leaders, and specialists provide destination knowledge or subject expertise. Their presence does not replace the supervision structure established by STEM-U or the responsibilities retained by parents on family programs.

When You Need Assistance

Participants should tell a member of the STEM-U Program Team promptly when they need help or when something is not operating as expected. Families should use the program communication procedures rather than relying on staff personal phones or social-media accounts.

Transportation Outside the Program

Company liability requirements prohibit staff from transporting participants in personal or rental vehicles. When additional transportation is required, an appropriate independent service must be used. Costs not included in the program or covered by insurance may remain the responsibility of the participant and family.

Feedback

STEM-U may request feedback during and after the program. Concerns requiring immediate attention should never be held for a survey. Early communication provides the best opportunity to investigate and address an issue while participants are still traveling.

Required Forms & Final Preparation

Parents and guardians must complete all registration requirements and submit every required form accurately and by the stated deadline. Program-specific requirements may vary, but the STEM-U document set may include the following items.

- Participant registration and emergency-contact information
- Medical Release and Emergency Authorization
- Medication Authorization, when applicable
- Minor Travel Consent
- Student & Family Code of Conduct acknowledgment
- Travel-insurance confirmation
- Passport, identification, visa, or electronic-authorization documentation
- Activity-specific waivers, releases, or health forms
- Other destination- or program-specific documents

The registration portal and required forms create the official participant record used to prepare documentation for the STEM-U Program Team in the field. Information supplied only by email, telephone, text message, or informal conversation does not replace the requirement to complete or update the official record.

Final Family Review

- Confirm participant and emergency-contact details are current
- Verify all required forms and waivers are complete
- Check passports, visas, travel authorizations, consent documents, and identification
- Confirm medications, allergies, dietary needs, accessibility needs, and behavioral information are documented
- Review baggage allowances, packing guidance, dress code, and payment methods
- Save departure details and official STEM-U contact information
- Review the Code of Conduct and program expectations with the participant

FINAL REMINDER | Accurate Information Protects the Participant

Parents and guardians remain responsible for ensuring the official participant record is complete, accurate, and updated through departure. If circumstances change, contact STEM-U promptly and follow the formal process for updating the record.

We're Here to Support You

The STEM-U Program Team and Operations Team are here to support participants and families throughout the journey. Clear preparation, timely communication, and cooperation with program procedures give us the best opportunity to respond effectively and create a successful experience.

We value the trust families place in STEM-U and look forward to sharing a program filled with learning, discovery, connection, and lasting memories.



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Hammock Expeditions, LLC
1200 SE 14th Street, Suite 8-150
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712
P: 984.223.9866
www.HammockExpeditions.com
www.STEMStudyTours.com

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